

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

PARTIAL-BIRTH ABORTION BAN  
ACT OF 1997—MESSAGE FROM  
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED  
STATES (H. DOC. NO. 105-158)

SPEECH OF

**HON. CHET EDWARDS**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, July 23, 1998*

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I am strongly opposed to late term abortions. In fact, in 1987, as a Texas State Senator, I helped pass a bill that prohibited the late term abortions. That bill is still law today in Texas.

But, there are major differences between the Texas law and this bill today.

First, in Texas, we outlawed all procedures—this bill still allows late term abortions.

Second, in Texas, our law was written to meet constitutional requirements. This bill is unconstitutional—as federal judges have ruled across America, this bill clearly oversteps the constitutional guidelines established in *Roe* versus *Wade*. The Texas law wasn't written to maximize political sound bites, it was written to save babies' lives.

Third, in Texas, we trusted women to make responsible choices—this bill does not. Specifically, the Texas law said that in rare, tragic

cases where the serious health of a woman is at risk, the difficult decision of terminating a pregnancy should be made by a woman and her doctor, not by politicians in Washington, DC.

In my opinion, if there is one frivolous late term abortion anywhere in America, that is one too many. It should be stopped. But, when a mother's life or health is at risk in rare cases, in those cases, government has no right to tell a woman what to do.

This bill would force a woman to put her health or fertility at risk, even when her baby has zero chance of survival after childbirth. To me, it is cruel and mean-spirited to tell a woman that she must risk her ability to have children in the future when she is about to face the tragedy of delivering a child that is doomed to die.

To the Republican men who refused to make changes in this bill to address this tragic problem I would say—what right do you have to tell a woman that she should risk her fertility—risk her ability to enjoy the joy of having a child—because you were more interested in political sound bites than in the rights of a woman?

Let us be clear. This bill could jeopardize a woman's future fertility even when her present baby is a troubled pregnancy and has no chance of survival. This bill would force a

woman's doctor to end her pregnancy with riskier procedures, and that is why the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists oppose this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I know this veto will be overridden for two reasons today.

First, many members believe that life begins at conception.

Second, many other members privately recognize that there are serious flaws in this bill, but they know that the Republican authors have written this for maximum impact in 30-second TV ads.

To those who genuinely believe for religious reasons that life begins at conception, and not only want to pass this bill, but have said that they want to restrict a woman's access to contraceptives—to you I say that I respect your religious views, but I question your right to force your religious views on others. Last week, you accused women and mothers who use contraceptives of being abortionists. Today, you are willing to risk women's fertility in rare, tragic cases of troubled pregnancies.

Finally, the sad thing about this debate today is that if some of its sponsors had been more interested in stopping late term abortions than in having a sound bite campaign issue, we could have passed a similar bill three years ago that would be saving lives today

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